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A WIDESPREAD BOY-HERO STORY.

THE cycle of stories relating to the boy-hero occupies a very important place in the folk-lore of the Plains Indians of North America. Stories of a similar character are found in the folklore of the peoples of northwestern Europe in which the monsters of the Indians are represented by cannibal giants and dragons. Jack-the-Giant-Killer has his counterpart in the slayer of Norwegian Trolls, who recognize the presence of a human being by means of the sense of smell, as did the Cornish giant of Fee! Fi! Fo! Fum! notoriety.

One Norwegian story of this class has a special feature which gives it a claim to more than a mere general relationship to the boy-hero tales of the Plains Indians. The collection of stories made by Dr. George A. Dorsey, and published by the American Folk-Lore Society, under the title of "*Traditions of the Skidi Pawnee*," gives, under the title of "*The Boy and the Horse*," an account of an orphan boy who possesses a wonderful horse, by the aid of which he performs great deeds and finally becomes chief of all the tribes. The animal was obtained from a rock, and it turned into an ugly horse, that was nothing but skin and bone and apparently very old. Mounted on this horse, the boy followed a war-party, and when they came to the enemy's country and the warriors went to attack a camp he remained with the women. Soon, however, he left them and then his horse became a fine gray horse. He mounted and came up with the men as they awaited the order to attack. He joined in the charge, was the first to enter the village, where he attacked a man who had on a war-bonnet. The horse did as it chose, and making a circuit it returned to the ravine where were the women with the ponies. There "he stood in the shape of an old horse, and the boy was present among the women. So the women saw him and knew that he was not in the battle."

On another occasion the poor boy acted in a similar way and killed two men without being recognized. On a third occasion he followed the war-party, and on the way the young men made fun of the boy and his horse. When a village was to be attacked, the boy took the horse into a hollow, where it turned into a fine horse. He put yellow paint on it, and over his own body and his spear. The boy gave the horse free rein, passed the others and attacked the enemy, killing three men, and then he and his horse disappeared, going to the place where the women and ponies were hidden. On the way home, the honor of killing the enemy was claimed by several men and they were given the most honorable place. When the council of chiefs was called to consider the matter, the poor boy sent his grandfather to tell the chiefs that he had killed the men. The grandfather told them but they did not believe it.

At the next war-party, the young man again went. His horse grew fat, and when preparations were made to attack the enemy the young man put yellow paint on his horse and spear. The command was given and the people gave the horses rein and the boy's horse went beyond all the others. The boy killed an enemy here and there and then went toward the south of the village, where the horse stopped and neighed. All the ponies in the village broke their ropes. Those that were loose ran up to the place where the horse was, and the boy went toward the women with a great drove of ponies. "The people all watched him doing this; now they knew that it was the young man who was doing all these brave deeds." On the return of the people to the village, the boy's claim to the honors of killing were admitted and he became a great chief. The surrounding tribes, when they heard of his doings, brought their people and asked him to lead them; for enemies had nearly conquered them. He led them against their enemies and the people made him chief of all the tribes, and then he had many other horses, but it was the old horse he used in battle. Some years afterwards the people did not obey his injunctions and the boy chief turned into stone. The horse returned to the rock whence the boy had taken it.

The story of "The Widow's Son," given by Asbjønsen in his "Norwegian Popular Tales," like that of the Skidi Pawnee, contains features derived from the special environment of the people. Thus, the horse in the former story was found by the boy-hero in an underground chamber (which may correspond to the Skidi rock), that he had entered through curiosity, contrary to the command of the Troll, his master. The horse told the boy, in return for his kindness, that they would have to flee or the Troll would kill them, and directed him to get an old suit of armor and a rusty sword and also a saddle that were in the room above; and also to take a whip of thorn, a stone, a water-flask, and a pot of ointment from other rooms. The youth then saddled and mounted the horse, which galloped off. The Troll was soon in pursuit, but he was intercepted by impediments caused by the objects thrown in his path by the boy, by the horse's direction, and finally he and all his companions were killed in trying to drink up the water of a lake that the water-flask had magically formed.

The boy and the horse continued on, and "when they had travelled a very long way they came to a green plain in a wood. 'Take off your armor now,' said the horse, 'and put on your rags only; lift my saddle and hang everything up in that large hollow linden, make yourself then a wig of pine moss, go to the royal palace, which lies close by, and there ask for employment. When you desire to see me, come to this spot, shake the bridle, and I will instantly be with you.'"

The youth did as the horse told him; and when he put on the moss wig "he became so pale and miserable to look at that no one would

have recognized him. He went to the palace, and on reaching it he asked only if he might serve in the kitchen to carry wood and water to the cook; but the cook-maid asked him why he wore such an ugly wig? 'Take it off,' said she, 'I will not have anybody here so frightful.' The youth refused and he had to go away, but finally he was engaged by the gardener to dig the ground, and, as none of the servants would sleep with him, he had to sleep alone under the stairs of the summer-house, which was raised some distance above the ground. Here one morning, while he was washing himself, he was seen by the daughter of the king, from her chamber-window, and she went to the gardener and told him that the boy was to sleep that evening by the door in her room. He went and every night afterwards he slept in the room of the princess, until the king, hearing of it, cast the youth into prison and confined his daughter to her room. The story now continues:—

"Some time after this there arose a war and disturbance in the country, and the king was obliged to take arms and defend himself against another king, who threatened to deprive him of his throne. When the youth heard this he begged the jailer would go to the king for him, and propose to let him have armor and a sword, and allow him to follow to the war. All the courtiers laughed when the jailer made known his errand to the king. They begged he might have some old trumpery for armor, that they might enjoy the sport of seeing the poor creature in the war. He got the armor and also an old jade of a horse, which limped on three legs, dragging the fourth after it.

"Thus they all marched forth against the enemy, but they had not gone far from the royal palace, before the youth stuck fast with his old jade in a swamp. Here he sat beating and calling to the jade, 'Hie! wilt thou go? hie! wilt thou go?' This amused all the others, who laughed and jeered as they passed. But no sooner were they all gone than, running to the linden, he put on his own armor and shook the bridle, and immediately the horse appeared and said, 'Do thou do thy best and I will do mine.'

"When the youth arrived on the field the battle had already begun, and the king was hard pressed; but just at that moment the youth put the enemy to flight. The king and his attendants wondered who it could be that came to their help; but no one had been near enough to speak to him, and when the battle was over he was away. When they returned the youth was still sitting fast in the swamp, beating and calling to his three-legged jade. They laughed as they passed, and said, 'Only look, yonder sits the fool yet.'

"The next day when they marched out the youth was still sitting there, and they again laughed and jeered at him; but no sooner had they all passed by than he ran again to the linden, and everything took place as on the previous day. Every one wondered who the strange warrior

was who had fought for them; but no one approached him so near that he could speak to him: of course no one ever imagined it was the youth.

"When they returned in the evening and saw him and his old jade still sticking fast in the swamp, they again made a jest of him; one shot an arrow at him and wounded him in the leg, and he began to cry and moan so that it was sad to hear, whereupon the king threw him his handkerchief that he might tie it about his leg. When they marched forth the third morning there sat the youth calling to his horse, 'Hie! wilt thou go? hie! wilt thou go?' — 'No, no! he will stay there till he starves,' said the king's men as they passed by, and laughed so heartily at him that they nearly fell from their horses. When they had all passed, he again ran to the linden, and came to the battle just at the right moment. That day he killed the enemy's king, and thus the war was at an end.

"When the fighting was over, the king observed his handkerchief tied round the leg of the strange warrior, and by this he easily knew him. They received him with great joy, and carried him with them up to the royal palace, and the princess, who saw them from her window, was so delighted no one could tell. 'There comes my beloved also,' said she. He then took the pot of ointment and rubbed his leg, and afterward all the wounded, so that they were all well again in a moment."

The king, of course, gave the princess to the youth for wife, and also half of his kingdom. The young king was then told by the horse to cut off its head, and when this was done the horse became a young prince. He had been turned into a horse by the king whom the hero-boy had slain, and sold to the Troll. He now recovered his kingdom, and the two young kings were friends as long as they lived.

This ending is very different from that of the Skidi story, but it is in line with the other incidents in which the Norwegian differs from the Plains Indian tale. The central idea of both is the episode of the horse, and the details of this in each story are so similar that it can hardly be doubted that either one of the peoples referred to has derived it from the other, directly or indirectly, or both stories have been derived from a common source.

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